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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/811,916	03/30/2004	Yasuyuki Numajiri	00684.003621.	3181
5514 7590 11/12/2008 FITZPATRICK CELLA HARPER & SCINTO 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA NEW YORK, NY 10112			EXAMINER BOWERS, NATHAN ANDREW	
			ART UNIT 1797	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 11/12/2008	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/811,916	Applicant(s) NUMAJIRI ET AL.	
	Examiner NATHAN A. BOWERS	Art Unit 1797	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 August 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

- 1) Claims 1-3 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Griffin (US 20050272169).

With respect to claim 1, Griffin discloses a biochemical cartridge comprising a reaction portion (Figure 1:14) that includes a plurality of chambers (Figure 1:16, 18, 17, 20) and a plurality of channels (Figure 1:15). A solution storage portion (Figure 1:12) is isolated and separated above the reaction portion. A penetrable portioning member (Figure 1:13) is disposed between the solution storage portion and the reaction portion so as to move the solution from the solution storage portion to the chamber of the reaction portion. This is disclosed in paragraphs [0009]-[0012] and [0084]-[0094]. Paragraphs [0034] and [0051] state that the solution storage portion and the reaction portion are constructed as independent articles that are brought together only at a time when the apparatus is in use. Paragraph [0044] states that the portions are reversibly coupled together using a mechanical clamping mechanism. Paragraphs [0030] and [0088] indicate that any one of the many chambers of the reaction portion may or may not contain a dried reagent.

With respect to claims 2 and 3, Griffin discloses the apparatus in claim 1 wherein the partition member is penetrable by pushing with a valve stem. In paragraphs [0096] and [0097], Griffin teaches that a piercing pin (Figure 3:145) and a plunger (Figure 1:130) are used to penetrate the partition member. The piercing pin is fully capable of acting as a valve stem that seals the hole through the partition member by being pushed to a second-stage.

With respect to claim 11, Griffin discloses a biochemical treatment apparatus comprising an accommodation unit in which a biochemical reaction cartridge including a reaction portion (Figure 1:14) and a solution storage portion (Figure 1:12) are mounted. The reaction and solution storage portions each have a plurality of chambers that correspond to one another such that reagents from the storage portion are collected in the reaction portion following the activation of a driving means (Figure 3:145). The driving means penetrates a partition member (Figure 1:13) of the biochemical reaction cartridge mounted in the accommodation unit. Various reaction treatment means are provided for causing the rupture of the partition member. The partition member can be broken due to the pumping of excess fluids to the chambers of the solution storage portion, or through the mechanical activation of a plunger (Figure 3:130). This is described in paragraphs [0084]-[0098]. Paragraph [0090] states that a control means in the form of a microprocessor is provided for regulating the motion of the driving means.

With respect to claim 12, Griffin discloses the apparatus in claim 11 wherein the penetration means is provided in the biochemical reaction cartridge. Figures 3-21 clearly show that a piercing pin is provided within the cartridge.

With respect to claim 13, Griffin discloses the apparatus in claim 11 wherein the penetration means is provided to the biochemical treatment apparatus. In paragraph [0014],

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Griffin states that the penetration means is provided in the form of extra fluid that is pumped to the chambers of the solution storage portion via the reaction treatment means.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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2) Claims 4, 5 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Griffin (US 20050272169).

With respect to claims 4 and 5, Griffin discloses the apparatus set forth in claim 3 as set forth in the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejections above. Griffin additionally teaches in paragraphs [0096] and [0097] that the needles (Figure 3:145) are moved using a pressing rod (Figure 3:130). Griffin does not expressly disclose that multiple pressing rods of differing lengths are used to determine how far the needles are allowed to penetrate into the partition member (Figure 3:113). However, simple changes to the shape and size of a structure are not considered to be patentable distinctions over the prior art. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to utilize pressing rods that are of a suitable length. The length of the pressing rods is considered to be a result effective variable that is optimized through routine experimentation. See MPEP 2144.04 and 2144.05.

With respect to claim 8, Griffin discloses the invention as set forth in the rejections above. Additionally, Griffin teaches that solutions contained in a plurality of chambers (Figure 1:22) on the solution storage portion (Figure 1:12) are independently moved through the partition member (Figure 1:13) and collected in corresponding chambers (Figure 1:116) of the reaction portion (Figure 1:14). Each solution is moved via channels (Figure 1:15) to a central reaction area (Figure 1:18) in order to facilitate the detection of analytes. Griffin, however, teaches that the same partition member is punctured multiple times. Griffin does not indicate that each solution storage portion chamber is associated with a separate partition member.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to divide the comprehensive partition member disclosed Griffin into a plurality of smaller partition members each selectively associated with a specific solution storage chamber. This would have been beneficial because it would have ensured that defects in one partitioning area do not affect the operation of the device in other partitioning areas. The separation of a large structure into a plurality of smaller structures characterized by identical properties is generally not considered to be a patentable improvement over the prior art. See MPEP 2144.04.

3) Claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Griffin (US 20050272169) as applied to claims 1, 8 and 11, and further in view of Vann (US 6432719).

Griffin discloses the apparatuses and method set forth in claims 1, 8 and 11 as set forth in the 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 rejections above. In paragraph [0090], Griffin teaches that the treatment sequence including the order of penetration of the partition member is regulated using a microprocessor controller. Griffin, however, does not indicate that the controller is capable of operating based on information provided by identification codes placed on the cartridge.

Vann discloses a biochemical reaction cartridge comprising a reaction portion formed by a base plate (Figure 1:22) and a frame assembly (Figure 1:46). The frame assembly is divided in such a way to provide a plurality of reaction chambers (Figure 1:32). A solution storage portion (Figure 1:42) is positioned over the reaction portion in order to move fluids stored within the storage portion to the chambers of the reaction portion using a partition member (Figure 7:278, 280). Specifically, Vann discloses in column 6, line 65 to column 8, line 11, column 10, lines 7-

49 and column 11, lines 46-64 that a magnetic pinch valve is used to regulate the flow of fluid to the reaction portion from the storage portion. Operation of the cartridge is regulated by a control computer that receives information regarding the contents of the solution storage containers via identification codes printed on the solution storage containers.

Griffin and Vann are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor regarding biochemical reaction cartridges.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to provide the cartridge disclosed by Griffin with an identification code that is reflective of the contents of each of the solution storage portion chambers. As evidenced by Vann, it is known in the art to use bar codes in an automated system to ensure that reagents are added to a reaction chamber in the correct order. The use of identification codes is effective since it allows the user to quickly determine the contents of a specific storage container and proceed according to the predetermined treatment sequence.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 21 August 2008 with respect to the 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 rejections involving Griffin have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's principle arguments are

(a) There is no indication that the solution storage and reaction portions are not unitary when not in use. The disclosure in paragraph [0034] refers to a reaction chamber, which is co-molded into the fluidic network during the production of the device. Paragraph [0034] does not refer to a separate and complete non-superposed reaction portion.

In response to Applicant's arguments, please consider the following comments.

As previously noted, paragraphs [0034] and [0051] state that the reaction portion is formed separately from the storage portion. The portions are reversibly attached to each other, as paragraph [0044] indicates that luer fittings are used to mechanically clamp the portions together. Because the reaction portion and the storage portion are (1) manufactured separately, (2) are formed as two independent pieces, and (3) are held together by a mechanical clamping mechanism during processing, it must be concluded that the Griffin solution storage portion is fully capable of being kept apart from the reaction portion when not in use. Claim limitations regarding the relative position of the reaction portion to the storage portion during times of inactivity represent recitations of an intended use. As noted above, the Griffin apparatus is fully capable of being operated according to this intended use.

In response to applicant's argument that Griffin does not teach that the solution storage portion is not superposed on the reaction portion when not in use, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.

(b) Griffin does not disclose the use of blank chambers. Rather, Griffin teaches that chambers in the first part contain dry reagents.

In response to Applicant's arguments, please consider the following comments.

Paragraphs [0030] and [0088] state that the chambers in the reaction portion *may or can* include dry reagents, thus also implying that the chambers also *may not* include dry reagents.

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Griffin is not committed to the inclusion of dry reagents one way or the other. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that some of the chambers (Figure 1:16) may include dry reagents while other chambers (Figure 1:16) may not. One of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that none of the chambers (Figure 1:16) may have dry reagents, and that only the central mixing chamber (Figure 1:18) may have dry reagents. In no way does Griffin require the inclusion of dry reagents in any particular chamber. Griffin merely suggests that some chambers *might* include dry reagents if dry reagents are necessary for a particular experiment.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nathan A. Bowers whose telephone number is (571) 272-8613.

The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8 AM to 5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/William H. Beisner/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797

/Nathan A Bowers/
Examiner, Art Unit 1797